

car to discover that something was seriously amiss. Anger and despair struggled there for predominance. Richard III. of England must have given just such a glance at his last horse foundered on Bosworth Field.

Medenham never passed another motorist in trouble without stopping. "Anything the matter?" he asked, when the Mercury was halted with the ease of a trained athlete poised in suspended motion.

"Everything!" The chauffeur snapped out the word without turning. He was a man devoid of faith, or hope, or charity.

"Can I help?"

"Can you—" came the surly response.

Thereupon, many Viscounts would have swept on into Piccadilly without further parley; not so Medenham. He scrutinized the soldierly figure, the half-averted face. "You must be hard hit, Simmonds, before you would answer me in that fashion," said he quietly.

SIMMONDS positively jumped up when he heard his name. He wheeled round, raised his cap, and broke into stuttering excuse. "I beg your Lordship's pardon. I hadn't the least notion—"

These two had not met since they discussed Boer trenches and British Generals during a momentary halt on the Tugela slope of Spion Kop. Medenham remembered the fact, and forgave a good deal on account of it.

"I have seen you look far less worried under a plunging fire from a pom-pom," he said cheerily. "Now, what is it? Wires out of order?"

"No, my Lord. That wouldn't bother me very long. It's a regular smash this time—transmission shaft snapped."

"Why?"

"I was run into by a railway van and forced against a street refuge."

"Well, if it was not your fault—"

"Oh, I can claim damages, right enough. I have plenty of witnesses. Even the driver of the van could only say that one of his horses slipped. It's the delay I'm jibbing at. I hate to disappoint my customers, and this accident may cost me three hundred pounds, and a business of my own into the bargain."

"By gad! That sounds rather stiff. What's the hurry?"

"This is my own car, my Lord. Early in the spring I was lucky enough to fall in with a rich American. I was driving for a company then; but he offered me three hundred pounds, money down, for a three months' contract. Straightaway I bought this car for five hundred, and it is half paid for. Now the same gentleman writes from Paris that I am to take his daughter and another lady on a thousand miles' run for ten days, and he says he is prepared to hire me and the car for the balance of another period of three months on the same terms."

"But the ladies will be reasonable when you explain matters."

"Ladies are never reasonable, my Lord, especially young ones. I have met Miss Vanrenen only once; but she struck me as one who was very much accustomed to having her own way. And she has planned this tour to the last minute. Any other day I might have hired a car and picked up my own somewhere on the road; but on Derby Day and in fine weather—"

Simmonds spread wide his hands in sheer inability to find words that would express the hopelessness of retrieving his shattered fortunes. Dale was fidgeting, fingering taps and screws unnecessarily; but Medenham was pondering his former trooper's plight. He refused to admit that the position was quite so bad as it was painted.

"Oh, come now," said he, "I'll give you a tow to the nearest repair shop, and a word from me will expedite the business. Meanwhile, you must jump into a hansom and appeal to the sympathies of Miss—Vanrenen, is it?"

"No use, my Lord," was the stubborn answer. "I am very much obliged to you, but I should not dream of detaining you."

"Simmonds, you are positively cantankerous. I can spare the time."

"The first race is at one-thirty, my Lord," muttered Dale, greatly daring.

Medenham laughed. "You too?" he cried. "Someone has given you a tip, I suppose?"

Dale flushed under this direct analysis of his feelings. He grinned sheepishly. "I am told that Eyot can't lose the first race, my Lord," he said.

"Ah! And how much do you mean to speculate?"

"A sovereign, my Lord."

"Hand it over. I will lay you starting price."

Somewhat taken aback, though nothing said or done by Viscount Medenham could really surprise him, Dale's leather garments creaked and groaned while he produced the coin, which his master duly pocketed.

"Now, Simmonds," went on the pleasant lazy voice, "you see how I have comforted Dale by taking his money; won't you tell me what is the real obstacle that blocks the way? Are you afraid to face this imperious young lady?"

"No, my Lord. No man can provide against an accident of this sort. But Miss Vanrenen will lose all confidence in me. The arrangement was that to-day's spin should be a short one, to Brighton. I was to take the ladies to Epsom in time for the Derby, and then we were to run quietly to the Metropole. Miss Vanrenen made such a point of seeing the race she will be horribly disappointed. There is an American horse entered—"

"By gad, another gambler!"

Simmonds laughed grimly. "I don't think Miss Vanrenen knows much about racing, my Lord; but the owner of Grimalkin is a friend of her father's, and he is confident about winning this year."

"I am beginning to understand. You are in a fix of sorts, Simmonds."

"Yes, my Lord."

"And what is your plan? I suppose you have one?"

"I have sent for a boy messenger, my Lord. When he arrives I shall write— Oh, here he is."

Viscount Medenham descended leisurely and lit a cigarette. Dale, the stoic, folded his arms and looked fixedly at the press of vehicles passing the end of the street. Vivid memories of Lord Medenham's chivalrous courtesy—his Lordship's dashed tomfoolery, he called it—warned him that life was about to assume new interests.

The boy messenger, summoned telephonically by a sympathetic maidservant in a neighboring house, guessed that the man standing on the pavement owned the motor car to which he had been directed. Here were two cars; but the boy did not hesitate. He saluted.

"Messenger, sir?" he said.

"This way," intervened Simmonds curtly.

"No. I want you," said Medenham. "You know Sevastopol's, the cigarette shop in Bond-st?"

"Yes, sir."

"Take this card there and ask him to despatch the order at once." Meanwhile he was writing, "Kindly send 1,000 Salonikas to 91 Cavendish Square."

Simmonds looked anxious. He was not a smooth spoken fellow; but he did not wish to offend Lord Medenham. "Would your Lordship mind if I sent the boy to the Savoy Hotel first?" he asked nervously. "It is rather late, and Miss Vanrenen will be expecting me."

"What time are you due at the Savoy?"

"We were to start at twelve o'clock; but the ladies' luggage had to be strapped on, and—"

"Ah, the deuce! That sounds formidable."

"Of course, they must stow everything into the canvas trunks I supplied, my Lord."

Medenham stooped and examined the screws that fastened an iron grid at the back of the broken down vehicle.

"Whip open the tool box, Dale, and transfer that arrangement to my car!" he said briskly. "Make it fit somehow. I don't approve of damaged paintwork, nor of weight behind the driving wheels for that matter; but time presses, and the ladies might shy at a request to repack their belongings into my kit bags, even if I was carrying them. Now, Simmonds, give me the route, if you know it, and hand over your road maps. I mean to take your place until your car is put right. Wire me where to expect you. You ought to be shipshape in three days, at the utmost."

"My Lord—" began the overwhelmed Simmonds.

"I'll see you hanged as high as Haman before I hand over my Mercury to you, if that is what you are thinking of!" said Medenham sharply. "Why, man, she is built like a watch! It would take you a month to understand her. Now, you boy, be off to Sevastopol's. Where can I buy a chauffeur's kit, Simmonds?"

"Your Lordship is really too kind. I couldn't think of permitting it," muttered Simmonds.

"What, then? Do you refuse my assistance?"

"It isn't that, my Lord. I am awfully grateful—"

"Are you afraid that I shall run off with Miss Vanrenen, hold her to ransom, send Black Hand letters to her father, and that sort of thing?"

"From what little I have seen of Miss Vanrenen, she is much more likely to run off with you, my Lord. But—"

"You're growing incoherent, Simmonds. For goodness sake tell me where to go! You can safely leave all the rest to me, and we haven't a minute to lose if I am to secure any sort of decent motoring kit before I turn up at the hotel. Pull yourself together, man! Action front and fire! Guns unlimbered and first range finder despatched in nineteen seconds—eh, what?"

Simmonds squared his shoulders. He had been a driver in the Royal Artillery before he joined Viscount Medenham's troop of Imperial Yeomanry. There was no further argument. Dale, oriental in phlegm now that Eyot was safely backed, was already unscrewing the luggage carrier.

HALF an hour later the Mercury curled with sinuous grace out of the busy Strand into the courtyard of the Savoy Hotel. The inclosure snorted with motors, the air was full of gasoline smoke, all the world of the hotel was going, or had already gone, to Epsom.

One quick glance at the lines of traffic showed Medenham that the Swiss Rear Admiral on duty would not allow him to remain an unnecessary instant in front of the actual doorway. He swung his car to the exit side, crept in behind a departing taxicab, and grabbed a hurrying boy in buttons.

"You listen to me, boy!" he said.

The boy remarked that his hearing was perfect.

"Well, go to Miss Vanrenen and say that her motor is waiting. Seize a porter, and do not leave him until he has brought two canvas trunks from the lady's rooms. Help him to strap them on the grid, and I'll give each of you half a crown."

The boy vanished. Never before had chauffeur addressed him so convincingly.

Medenham, standing by the side of the car, was deep

in the contours of a road map of Sussex, when a sweet if somewhat petulant voice, apparently at his elbow, complained that its owner could not see Simmonds anywhere. He turned instantly. A slim, straight figured girl, wearing a dust cloak and motor veil, had come out from the Savoy Court doorway and was scrutinizing every automobile in sight. Near her was a short stout woman whose personality seemed to be strangely familiar to Medenham. He never forgot anyone, and this woman was certainly not one of his acquaintances; nevertheless, her features, her robinlike strut, her very amplitude of girth and singular rotundity of form, came definitely within the net of his retentive memory.

To be sure, he gave her but brief survey, since her companion, in all likelihood Miss Vanrenen, might quite reasonably attract his attention. Indeed, she would find favor in the eyes of any young man, let alone one who had such cause as Viscount Medenham to be interested in her appearance. In her amazingly lovely face the haughty beauty of an aristocrat was softened by a touch of that piquant femininity which the well bred American girl seems to bring from Paris with her clothes. A mass of dark brown hair framed a forehead, nose, and mouth of almost Grecian regularity, while her firmly modeled chin, slightly more pronounced in type, would hint at unusual strength of character were not the impression instantly dispelled by the changing lights in a pair of marvelously blue eyes. In the course of a single second Medenham found himself comparing them to blue diamonds, to the azure depths of a sunlit sea, to the exquisite tint of the myosotis. Then he swallowed his surprise and lifted his cap.

"May I ask if you are Miss Vanrenen?" he said.

The blue eyes met his. For the first time in his life he was thrilled to the core by a woman's glance. "Yes," she answered with a smile, an approving smile, perhaps, for the Viscount looked very smart in his tight fitting uniform, but none the less wondering.

"Then I am here instead of Simmonds. His car was put out of commission an hour ago by a brutal railway van, and will not be ready for the road during the next day or two. May I offer my services in the meantime?"

The girl's astonished gaze traveled from Medenham to the spick and span automobile. For the moment he had forgotten his rôle, and each word he uttered deepened her bewilderment, which grew stronger when she looked at the Mercury. The sleek coachwork and spotless leather upholstery, the shining brass fittings and glistening wings, every visible detail in fact, gave good promise of the excellence of the engine stowed away beneath the square bonnet. Evidently Miss Vanrenen had cultivated the habit of gathering information rapidly.

"This car?" she exclaimed, with a delightful lifting of arched eyebrows.

"Yes, you will not be disappointed in it; I assure you. I am doing Simmonds a friendly turn in taking his place; so I hope the slight accident will not make any difference to your plans."

"He could not leave his car, which is in a side street off Piccadilly. He would have sent a note; but he remembered that you had never seen his handwriting, so, as a proof of my genuineness, he gave me your itinerary."

Medenham produced a closely written sheet of note-paper, which Miss Vanrenen presumably recognized. She turned to her stout companion, who had been summing up car and chauffeur with careful eyes since Medenham first spoke.

"What do you think, Mrs. Devar?" she said.

When he heard the name Medenham was so amazed that the last vestige of chauffeurism vanished from his manner. "You don't mean to say you are Jimmy Devar's mother!" he gasped.

Mrs. Devar positively jumped. If a look could have slain, he would have fallen then and there. As it was, she tried to freeze him to death. "Do I understand that you are speaking of Captain Devar of Horton's Horse?" she said, aloof as an iceberg.

"Yes," he said coolly, though regretting the lapse. He had stupidly brought about an awkward incident, and must remember in future not to address either woman as an equal.

"I was not aware that my son was on familiar terms with the chauffeur fraternity."

"Sorry; but the name slipped out unawares. Captain Devar is, or used to be, very easygoing in his ways, you know."

"So it would seem." She turned her back on him disdainfully. "In the circumstances, Cynthia," she said, "I am inclined to believe that we ought to make further inquiries before we exchange cars and drivers in this fashion."

"But what is to be done? All our arrangements are made, our rooms ordered, I have even sent father each day's address. If we cancel everything by telegraph, he will be alarmed."

"Oh, I did not mean that," protested the woman hurriedly. It was evident that she hardly knew what to say. Medenham's wholly unexpected query had unnerved her.

"Is there any alternative?" demanded Cynthia ruefully, glancing from one to the other.

"It is rather late to hire another car to-day, I admit—" began Mrs. Devar.

"It would be quite impossible, madam," put in Medenham. "This is Derby Day, and there is not a motor to be obtained in London, except a taxicab. It was sheer good luck for Simmonds that he was able to secure me as his deputy."

He thanked his stars for that word "madam." Certainly the mere sound of it seemed to soothe Mrs. Devar's jarred nerves, and the appearance of the Mercury was even more reassuring.

"Ah, well," she said, "we are not traveling into the

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CHANGELESS

By Elizabeth K. Stratton

Tho' the long vistas of dead past arise
To hide the misty beauty of your eyes,—
Tho' years may spread their mighty wings between
The Then, and Now,—and all that might have been:—
And e'en tho' darkening Death shall part us twain,—
I know
That some time,—some where,—we shall meet again,
And you
Will find me true!